



HARRISONBURG | VA FRIENDLY BY NATURE



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Harrisonburg Tourism receives \$20,000 grant to promote outdoor efforts

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Soon even more people will realize all the great options Harrisonburg offers for outdoor experiences thanks to new state funding.

Harrisonburg Tourism has been awarded a \$20,000 grant by Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) to promote The Friendly City as the Outdoor Recreation Capital of the Shenandoah Valley. With cycling, outdoor recreation gear shops, craft breweries and great restaurants in close proximity to numerous trails, Harrisonburg draws many outdoor enthusiasts to hike, bike and explore. This grant will bring awareness to a broader audience, attracting new visitors and supporting Harrisonburg's tourism businesses by letting even more people know that Downtown Harrisonburg is a great basecamp to use when enjoying their next outdoor adventure.

VTC has awarded Harrisonburg \$130,000 in grants in the past four years, with approximately \$70,000 being focused on outdoor recreation. Tourists have increasingly looked since the pandemic for opportunities to hike, bike, run and relax outdoors, and Harrisonburg has proven to be a great option.

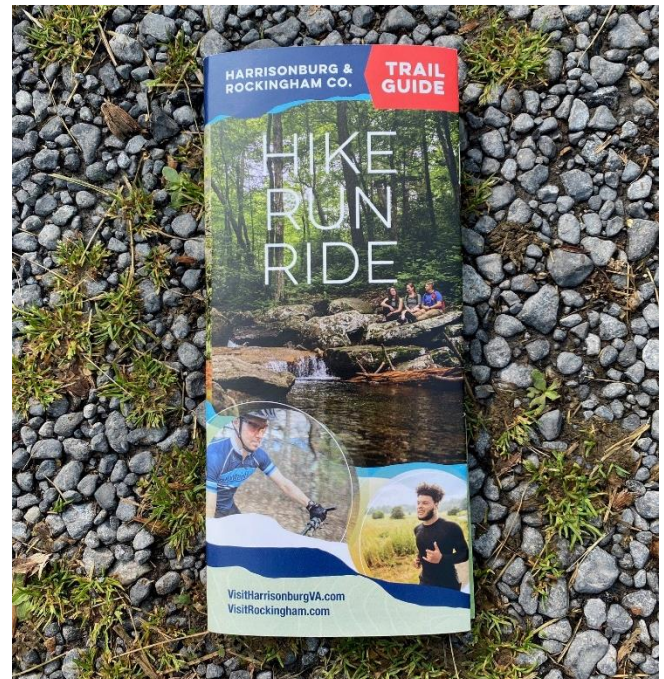
“Harrisonburg’s proximity to Shenandoah National Park, the Appalachian Trail and beautiful trails to the east and west is a considerable advantage,” Harrisonburg Tourism Manager Jennifer Bell said. “People flock to Harrisonburg as a basecamp with a plethora of lodging, dining and shopping options including gear shops in close proximity to amazing trails.”

The National Park Service reports that Shenandoah National Park had 1.6 million visitors in 2021 with an economic impact of \$113 million in local gateway regions (like Harrisonburg). This is the largest amount of visitor spending since 2012 (see the study here: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>).

Tourism is an important economic component to the local Harrisonburg economy. Visitor spending in Harrisonburg reached \$214 million in 2021 and generated almost \$11 million in local tax dollars according to Tourism Economics.

This grant will allow Harrisonburg to continue to advertise in local and national outdoor recreation publications including Blue Ridge Outdoors and Outside Magazine as well as to do a focused advertising campaign on Trip Advisor. It will help highlight the new online trail guide featuring 15 local cycling, hiking and running trails. Find the trail guide and much more on local tourism at <https://www.visitharrisonburgva.com/trails>.

*The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,700 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.*



For those looking to enjoy great trails in the Shenandoah Valley, Harrisonburg is a perfect place to set up their basecamp. You can learn more about local trails in our new Trail Guide, funded in part by a VTC grant.